started to drill for oil about 3 miles from town, I will never forget as a little boy going out there in the evenings in my parent's car. We saw all these lights on the oil rig at night. We sat there and looked at it. That was entertainment.

We did that night after night. We figured at some point they were going to strike oil. We didn't want to be too close to the rig, because the movies showed that when you strike oil, you get a gusher.

But we watched. We would drive out there and park, the whole town would go out there and park. We would watch that oil well. Nothing was happening, of course, nothing you could see. We saw the lights. That was a whole lot more than was going on in town.

Well, it turns out it was a dry well; never drilled another one. But that was my experience. As a young boy, my father also managed a gasoline station. So I pumped a lot of gas as a young boy. Some say that my occupation hasn't changed so much being in the Senate, but I contest that, of course.

My point is this: Oil is central to our lives and will remain central to our lives, but we need to find a way to reduce our dependence on the sources of oil that come from very troubled parts of the world.

In North Dakota, for example, in western North Dakota, we now have what is called the Bakken Shale, which could, we hope—the U.S. Geological Survey will determine this—but it could contain dramatic amounts of recoverable oil.

Incidentally, I was in western North Dakota visiting with Marathon Oil that is now drilling. It is unbelievable what they are doing. They drill 2 miles down—2 miles down—then take a giant bend and drill 2 miles out. One drilling rig. They go down 2 miles and then bend it and then drill 2 miles out. It is unbelievable technology.

We hope there is additional production here in this country. That is one way to be less dependent on foreign sources of oil. We can take a look at where you can get additional oil. I mentioned the Gulf of Mexico is a substantial opportunity for us as well. But there are a lot of things for us to do and do well, if we are going to be less dependent on foreign sources of oil, also, if we are going to have an energy policy that has much more credibility than our current policy.

Now, the Congress passed what was called the Energy Policy Act of 2005. We did a number of things there. I was one of the Members of the Congress who, at that time and since that time, one of I guess four or five of us in the Senate who tried to open up what is called Lease 181 in the Gulf of Mexico. We succeeded in doing that. It is a smaller tract than we had hoped, but that also will contribute to the production of additional energy here at home.

Some say our energy strategy for the future must be ''digging and drilling.'' I call that yesterday forever, digging and drilling. Yes, we are going to dig and, yes, we are going to drill. But if that is all we do, we lose. Everything we use in this country every day needs to be more efficient. Our refrigerators, our air conditioners, our vacuums, everything needs to be more efficient. That is No. 1.

We have had very big debates on strange-named things such as SEER standards. I mean how many people have heard of SEER 13 standards for air conditioners. But it makes a big difference in the number of powerplants you have to build in this country based on the standards for efficiency for all the things we use with respect to appliances.

In addition to all that, we at the same time have to rely on other sources and other types of energy; wind energy as an example. Well, my colleague from Tennessee apparently does not like wind energy. God bless him. He has a right not to like wind energy.

It seems to me it makes a lot of sense with a turbine, the much more improved turbines and technologically capable turbines, to extract the energy from the wind and turn it into electricity. Yes, it is an intermittent source of electricity because you do not produce it when the wind is not blowing. But in some States, my State in particular, which is ranked by the Department of Energy as having the largest wind energy potential, taking energy from the wind and producing electricity with that energy makes a lot of sense.

We have an exciting experiment going on in North Dakota that I have been involved in: taking energy from the wind through a wind turbine, turning that energy through a turbine into electricity, using electricity through the process of electrolysis to separate hydrogen from water. You use an intermittent energy source to produce hydrogen and store the hydrogen. That is pretty unbelievable. Yet we can do that. We can do that, and it is going make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Now one of the proposals that will be offered by my colleague, Senator BINGAMAN, which I intend to be here and support, and I believe several have spoken in opposition to it, is what is called a renewable portfolio standard. Not a very sexy name, in fact we should rename it, renewable energy standard of some type.

But it is simply this: With respect to electricity that we are creating in this country, 15 percent of that electricity should come from renewable sources. Establishing a national standard, a goal, what is it we want to meet? Where do we want to go? An old saying: If you don't care where you are, you will never be lost.

Well, I mean, if we do not care where we are, we will never have a standard that we will miss. But how about ascribing a standard for this country that forces us to reach a little bit and says that, for every kilowatt hour of electricity we are going to use, 15 percent of what we produce is going to come from renewable sources of energy.

Once again, it relieves and begins to withdraw our heavy dependence on foreign sources of oil because a substantial amount of our electricity now comes from fossil fuels, from natural gas and coal and so on.

Now, the issue of the renewable portfolio standard, I understand, is going to be controversial because some do not want the Federal Government to be involved in requiring something such as this. But, frankly, I don't think we have much choice. The other issue that will be involved in with this bill, which I support, is a renewable fuels standard. That renewable fuels standard is one that calls for 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2022. Now, I helped write the last renewable fuel standard. It was the first one we ever established. It was 7½ billion gallons by 2012.

We are going to be at 10 billion gallons, exceeding that standard in a year or two. We believe we should aspire to achieve much more; a renewable fuels standard, using the biofuels; yes, the production of ethanol; growing energy in our farm fields on a renewable basis, you can do that year after year; the ethanol that can come from cellulose that I believe has great capability in our future. All of that is good for this country.

It is good for our farmers, good for our consumers, it is good for beginning to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil. Now, we have a lot of issues we are going to be discussing, some controversial, some perhaps not, but my hope is that in the coming week and a half or so we can finish this Energy bill.

I wish to show a couple of charts again. First of all, the amount of oil we use in this country. Those are million barrels per day. I mentioned we suck 84 million barrels of oil out of this little planet of ours. Look at what we use in the United States. Our population uses one-fourth of all the oil that is taken out of this planet every single day.

I mean, that is an oil intensity for our economy that, in my judgment, needs to be changed. Then, finally, let me say again, if 70 percent of that oil, nearly 70 percent is used in that vehicle fleet. If in that vehicle fleet we have seen all those improvements in acceleration, for example, and no improvement with respect to miles per gallon, then we better figure out how we address this in a different way.

One other item I am going to talk about for a moment is something called SPR. One of the problems with this life is there are so many acronyms and so many shorthand names for things, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We are doing something that makes a lot of sense to me. We are taking oil and sticking it underground and saving it for a time when we might need it, a security reserve of oil. The Strategic Petroleum Reserves makes sense to me. In fact, we increased the